The
Shuttle

Time flies faster than a weaver's shuttle.



Vale Miss Kathleen McCredie AM
1928-2026

Mrs Megan Krimmer
Headmistress

As you are aware, we learned with great sadness of the peaceful passing of Miss Kathleen McCredie (1945), Abbotsleigh's seventh Headmistress, on 22 September this year. On Tuesday, the School had the privilege of holding a moving Memorial Service in honour of Miss McCredie, who was highly revered as a visionary, wise and very supportive leader. Her dedication to Abbotsleigh left an indelible mark on generations of Abbotsleigh girls. She also had a very positive impact on the many Abbotsleigh staff who served under her, and many heads at other schools, past and present, who had the privilege of knowing her and benefitting from her great wisdom and support.

I would like to thank Mrs Victoria Rennie, Rev Sarah Hobba, Mrs Alex Lightfoot, our wonderful Music Department, and the supporting teams, for organising such a poignant and magnificent service. Highlights included tributes from Mr David McCredie on behalf of the McCredie family; Mrs Liz Cannon on behalf of staff (past and present); and Dr Fiona Robinson (Head Prefect, 1979) on behalf of Abbotsleigh Old Girls. The apt and powerful address by Mrs Robyn Claydon, Miss McCredie's Deputy Headmistress, was both inspiring and thought-provoking. Further, the congregation very much appreciated the beautiful music provided by our organist, Mr Kurt Ison, and our girls.

Some may be aware that sadly Miss McCredie's beloved companion, Nikki Seymour (Snekker, 1954), Abbotsleigh's former Head of Music, also passed away recently and it was most fitting that her son, Mr Tony Seymour could be part of the service to pay tribute to Miss McCredie on behalf of the Seymour family.

The respect and esteem in which Miss McCredie is held was apparent by the number of people who paid their respects in the Chapel and online on Tuesday. Indeed, it was wonderful to welcome former Headmistresses, Mrs Dianne Nichols, Mrs Judith Wheeldon and Mrs Judith Poole; former Deputy Headmistresses, Mrs Robyn Claydon and Mrs Rosemary Abrahams; former Head of Junior School, Mrs Barbara Nichol; and former Chaplains Rev Ross McDonald and Rev Bruce Tasker, as well as many Abbotsleigh Old Girls, former and current Abbotsleigh staff, former and current heads of other schools, and members of the McCredie and Seymour families. We were also fortunate to see the brilliant documentary about Miss McCredie, created and produced by AOG Rebecca Baillie (1989), at the morning tea that followed the service.





Visit the Parent Portal to edit your profile, view the calendar and view parent notices.

As I wrote last term:
For many years, Miss McCredie served our School with wisdom, dedication and an unwavering commitment to the education and wellbeing of generations of Abbotsleigh girls. Her leadership helped shape the character of our School and reinforced the values that continue to guide us today.

Miss McCredie's connection to Abbotsleigh spanned a lifetime. Having entered the School as a student in 1940, she later became the first, and to date, the only Old Girl to serve as Headmistress. At just 26 years of age, she was appointed Headmistress of SCEGGS Wollongong before returning to Abbotsleigh in 1970 as Headmistress. Her leadership over the next 17 years left an enduring mark on the School and generations of young women.

A passionate educator and visionary leader, Miss McCredie championed the education and empowerment of young women through a rigorous and well-rounded education. Under her leadership, Abbotsleigh flourished, with significant growth in enrolment, the strengthening of the boarding community, and an ambitious building program that included new science laboratories, language facilities, the Centenary Building incorporating the Peter Duly Concert Hall auditorium, gymnasium and music rooms, as well as extensions to both the Junior and Senior School libraries.

Her legacy endures through the McCredie Boarding House, named in her honour, the Kathleen McCredie Award initiated by the AOGU, and the generations of Abbotsleigh girls inspired by her leadership. In recognition of her outstanding contribution to education, she was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in 1984.

As Headmistress of Abbotsleigh, Miss McCredie also contributed to the wider education community as an active and highly respected member of AHISA (Association of Heads of Independent Schools of Australia) and AHIGS (Association of Heads of Independent Girls' Schools).

As one former member of staff who subsequently became the head of another school wrote to me on hearing the news of Miss McCredie's passing:

'I will always be grateful for [Miss McCredie's] wisdom, leadership and friendship. Her Christian faith was central to her being. I have no doubt that she has been welcomed into her new life with the words, "well done thou good and faithful servant".'

Vale Miss McCredie, your legacy will most definitely live on at Abbotsleigh through the many generations of Abbotsleigh girls past, present and future.

Remembrance Day

This week, along with fellow Australians across our nation, Abbotsleigh commemorated Remembrance Day. In particular, I would like to thank Ms Penny Chilton, our Head of Senior College, for organising a very moving service indeed for our senior girls.

The service commenced with the Flag Party consisting of cadets – Phoebe, Aelis, Bethany (Year 11) and Sarah (Year 8) and the Acknowledgement of Country by Jessie and Cathy (Year 8). This was followed by an excellent address by Olivia (Year 11), who paid tribute to the Rats of Tobruk. Dineli, Kate, Margot, Eve, Nimue, Heli and Chloe (Year 11) were also involved in the service. Further, Zoe (Year 10) played the Last Post, and Siya (Year 9) played The Rouse. Both girls played beautifully. We are very grateful to all involved in this poignant service. Thank you, girls.

I warmly commend to you Olivia's excellent tribute to the 'Rats of Tobruk'.





Remembrance Day 2026 Address

Olivia, *Year 11*

What makes someone a hero?

It's a question that has followed me for years.

When I was three, it was Peppa Pig. When I was five, it was Justin Bieber. When I was 10, it was Batman.

But now, at 16, and as we remember those who have served, sacrificed, gifted us freedom and shown what it means to not only be Australian but someone brave, I think I've finally found an answer.

I am humbled and honoured to speak today, as we remember that their legacy is not only the memory of a great name, but the inheritance of a great example. And so, as we honour what is most fittingly termed the ANZAC spirit, I'd like to share the story of the Rats of Tobruk.

They were ordinary Australians who, in the face of extraordinary adversity, showed remarkable endurance, courage and mateship to defy a seemingly invincible enemy.

In fact, I was inspired by my mum's friend's father, the late Robert Cecil Hall Hart, who was one of the 14,000 Australian soldiers who fought in the North African Campaign.

For 241 days in 1941, the city of Tobruk became the centre of a siege, where the 9th Division held strong for eight months against German and Italian forces. Outnumbered and outgunned, they faced constant artillery barrages, bombing raids and the unrelenting heat of the Libyan desert.

To survive, Robert Hart explained that they would dig and throw themselves into holes to avoid the shrapnel of exploding bombs.

Because of this, the Nazis mocked that the Australians were, 'caught like rats in a trap', saying they would live like rats and die like rats in the underground caves and dugouts they used to survive. The Nazis' intention was clear – to break morale, to reduce them to something small and to make surrender feel inevitable.

But they had underestimated one thing – the Aussie sense of humour, because their plan backfired completely. The Australian soldiers loved the name and called themselves the 'Rats of Tobruk'. They even joked that the eight-month siege was just a nice, relaxing long weekend in the desert. At the end of the day, it's a compliment. Rats are tenacious – they survive in the harshest conditions. They endure. Once a rat decides to stay, it can be very difficult to make them leave. As one veteran put it, they might have lived like rats, but they fought like lions. And perhaps most importantly, when your enemy starts calling you silly names, you know you have already won.

In fact, the soldiers were so proud of the name they even created their own unofficial medals, featuring a rat at the centre, fashioned from the wreckage of a shot-down German aircraft. But arguably the best outcome was the new morning greeting: 'G'day rat.'

The reason I love this story so much is that it articulates something deeply true about the ANZAC spirit, and what it means to be Australian. It reflects that instinct to come together, to look out for one another and to endure when everything feels impossible. To be able to find humour and to hold onto hope in war is a strength I cannot even begin to fathom.

In Tobruk, it wasn't just about military duty to serve Britain or the Allies. It was about refusing to give in, standing by your mates and holding onto light in the darkest of places. This mateship tempered the horrors of war and forged an unbreakable sense of camaraderie.

As a result, Tobruk was the first time in World War II that German forces were stopped and forced onto the defensive in North Africa. The Rats 'no surrender, no retreat' spirit stands as a defining chapter of the ANZAC legend.

The Australian soldier I was inspired by, Robert Hart, told his daughter a story from his time in Tobruk that I would love to share today. She said that he was a great man who had been through so much and always tried to be kind.

The story goes that his best friend received a fruit cake in the post for his 21st birthday. They were sitting in a circle, the cake and a bottle of brandy in the middle, when suddenly a German plane began bombing them. So, as one would, Robert and his friends all dove for cover in a ditch. But not Charles Thesen. He ran back through the bullets and retrieved the cake before returning to the ditch. He and the cake intact. Priorities, right?

Of all the stories he could have told his daughter, this is the one he chose: a funny story about mateship, camaraderie and a bit of fruitcake. And I think that says everything. Because the ANZAC spirit was never about being fearless. It was about refusing to let fear take everything from you. And that, to me, is what the Rats of Tobruk understood better than anyone.

Superman once said that, '...a hero is an ordinary individual who finds the strength to persevere and endure in spite of overwhelming obstacles. They are the real heroes...' And though I've always been more of a Batman girl myself, I think Superman might be right on this one.

Let us remember them, not just today but every day in our lives. We honour them because they lived and let us hope we can prove worthy of that life.

Lest we forget.



Chaplain



Fearless in uncertainty

Rev Sarah Hobba
Senior Chaplain and Head of Christian Studies

Over the past weeks, Senior School House Chapel has reflected on Mary's Song, often called the *Magnificat*. What many would find surprising is that throughout the 20th Century, this song has sometimes been viewed as dangerous enough to be banned. The British ruled against it being publicly sung in colonial India, and in parts of Latin America it was discouraged because its message challenged powerful people and lifted up the lowly. Mary's song is not simply a gentle lullaby. It is a bold declaration that God notices those who are overlooked and that his kingdom turns the world's values upside down.

Perhaps that is why the *Magnificat* continues to resonate today. In a world that often celebrates power, status and success, Mary points instead to humility, trust and God's faithfulness. A humility, trust and faithfulness also witnessed in Miss McCredie's life.

Mary's confidence comes not from knowing what the future holds but from knowing the God who holds the future. Her example reminds us that Christian hope is not rooted in our ability to predict what comes next but in God's faithfulness through every generation. In times of uncertainty, Mary's ancient song remains a timeless invitation to trust.

Luke 1:46-55

46 And Mary said:
'My soul glorifies the Lord
47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,
48 for he has been mindful
of the humble state of his servant.
From now on all generations will call me blessed,
49 for the Mighty One has done great things for me—
holy is his name.
50 His mercy extends to those who fear him,
from generation to generation.
51 He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;
he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.
52 He has brought down rulers from their thrones
but has lifted up the humble.
53 He has filled the hungry with good things
but has sent the rich away empty.
54 He has helped his servant Israel,
remembering to be merciful
55 to Abraham and his descendants forever,
just as he promised our ancestors.'

Upcoming events

WHOLE SCHOOL

Parent Wellbeing Hive – parent wellbeing resources	Available to all parents on the Parent Portal	**Click here** to visit
After Namatjira Richard Dunn Exhibition	Saturday 31 October to Saturday 28 November	Grace Cossington Smith Gallery
Abbotsleigh Dance Festival	Saturday 14 November 12.30-6.30 pm	Senior School Assembly Hall
Abbotsleigh Foundation 2026 Giving Day	Wednesday 18 November	Visit the Giving Day website **here**

JUNIOR SCHOOL

Transition visit to Sydney Tower	Tuesday 17 November 10 am-1 pm	Sydney Tower
Year 6 gingerbread house decorating	Friday 20 November 3.45-5.15 pm	Everett Hall
Year 3 Soiree	Tuesday 24 November 6-7 pm	Everett Hall
Junior School Twilight Carols service	Thursday 26 November 4.30-8.30 pm	Junior School Oval
Year 6 Farewell and Dance	Friday 27 November 6-10 pm	PDCH and Senior School Cafeteria

SENIOR SCHOOL

Saturday sport	Saturday 14 November	**Click here**
Year 10 Red Earth immersion	Friday 13 to 20 November	Various regional locations
Year 10 Immersion Week	Monday 16 to 20 November	Various locations
Year 12 2027 assessments	Monday 16 to 20 November	
Year 7 zoo excursion	Wednesday 18 November	Taronga Zoo
Year 8 Wellbeing Day	Wednesday 18 November	
Year 7 Wellbeing Day	Thursday 19 November	
Year 8 Luna Park excursion	Thursday 19 November	Luna Park
Year 9 Wheeldon Cup performance	Friday 20 November 11 am-12.30 pm	Assembly Hall
Middle School color run	Friday 20 November 1-3.20 pm	Top Oval
Year 8 Medieval Day	Wednesday 25 November	
Year 7 Inquisitive Minds incursion	Thursday 26 November	Library seminar rooms
Senior School Carols Service	Sunday 29 November 7.15-8.30 pm	Senior School Chapel